

**REMARKS AT THE CEO BREAKFAST
OF THE FOUNDATION FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY**

(as prepared)

Ambassador Lee Feinstein

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Mr. Henkemeir, Dr. Chasey, ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for including me this morning in the Foundation's breakfast.

I want to share just how delighted I am to be here today with all of you – delighted because there is no snow! I arrived in Warsaw with my family on November 6. It was snowing when our plane landed, and it feels as if the city has been icebound covered since then. So I am delighted to be with you on such a gorgeous day – the sun is shining, and if the internet is correct, the temperature should cross 15 degrees.

Of course, I am equally delighted to join you to celebrate a cause to which your foundation, my government, and my Embassy have all committed themselves. I was not in Poland long before I heard of the work of the Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility. Your oft-quoted example "We feed 60,000 meals each month to 3,000 hungry Polish children in 15 schools each school day in Northwest Poland" is among the best-know CSR stories in the country. I also salute the work the Foundation does to encourage companies individually to incorporate strong CSR principles.

It seems to me that CSR is particularly well suited to Poland. Poles, U.S. investors, and colleagues from third countries tell me that U.S. and other western business are at the forefront of Poland's continuing economic – and cultural – transformation. They tell me that Poles are well educated, hard working, and entrepreneurial.

My own experience confirms that. They also tell me that these very talented Poles are incredibly adaptable when put into new cultural environments – like western corporate cultures – and introduced to new practices and habits. U.S. CEOs report anecdotally that the quality of their local workforce is among the highest in the world. In a recent report for the American Chamber of Commerce, KPMG found that 95% of U.S. investors reported that the availability of a skilled, high quality workforce was an "important" or "very important" factor in their decision to invest in Poland.

Programs that match western CSR best practices with Polish talent are blossoming. I know of a project that began some years ago as an effort to bring the internet to rural kinds on both sides of Poland's eastern border. It has since blossomed into a public-private partnership that has built schools and recreational facilities, sponsored educational exchange programs, and underwritten travel and equipment for students in underserved, rural school districts. The program is not just improving the educational experience of a group of students. It has connected kids from different countries – in a more real, tangible way than television and movies ever could – to the wider world outside of their home villages.

My boss, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, has committed to increasing the State Department's engagement with the private sector and civil society – exactly to encourage the kinds of connections that U.S. investors, and your membership, are committed to supporting. CSR is also a priority for the U.S. Embassy. Last year, the Embassy gave some money and helped set up some meetings for a group that wanted to transplant a successful public-private partnership from the United States into Poland.

The partnership brings together schools, companies, and government to support intensive entrepreneurship education for high-school aged kids. They want to make successful businesspeople out of young Poles, just as they have done with two generations of Americans.

On the first day of the program, the students and teachers nearly rebelled at the unfamiliar teaching methods the Americans brought with them. But by the end of the program, they were feverishly engaged in the innovative projects they had developed, engrossed in their ideas, their teamwork, and their successes. The program is on-track to run again this year, with even deeper Polish support and a waiting list of student-applicants.

Corporate social responsibility, when boiled down, is nothing more or less than putting the public interest alongside the bottom line. Secretary Clinton put it much better than I can when she said that, "When companies support the issues that their employees, their customers, and their communities care about, everybody benefits. Whether they are investing in education or environmental conservation, combating poverty or a preventable disease, these firms are providing the foundation for a healthier workforce, a more informed customer base, and an atmosphere where free enterprise and free markets can thrive."

Every year the Secretary of State recognizes one or two U.S. companies for their leadership in corporate social responsibility and governance with the Award for Corporate Excellence. Last year, over 40 companies were nominated worldwide, and the award was given to Trilogy International Partners, a privately held company based in Bellevue, Washington, for their work in Haiti. In 2008, Cargill/China was recognized.

While I cannot promise a U.S. company in Poland will be recognized this year by Secretary Clinton, I would be proud to nominate one.

Bill, thank you again for the kind invitation to address the Foundation today. If nothing else, I hope I communicated to you all that your mission is my job. Please look to the U.S. Embassy as a partner in supporting your own good works, and thanks to all of you all for your efforts.